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U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

USDA TAKES EMERGENCY ACTION ON STOCKTON, CALIF., MEDFLY FIND

WASHINGTON, June 25—Emergency Medfly regulations on movement of host fruit, aerial insecticide treatments and increased trapping have been ordered in California's San Joaquin County, U.S. Department of Agriculture officials said today.

The actions are being taken as a result of the fertile male Medfly found in a loquat tree in an urban area south of Stockton, Calif.

The regulated area includes about 81 square miles, according to Harvey Ford, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

"Other emergency actions include aerial insecticide treatment with malathion of the nine square miles immediately surrounding the find, starting this evening," Ford said. "The density of traps is also being increased—from 10 traps per square mile to 50 in the square mile around the find."

The find—confirmed as a Medfly on June 24—was the first since mid-November 1981, and officials had been cautiously optimistic that the Medfly emergency might be almost over. "The recent find was not a complete surprise and the Medfly will still be eradicated," Ford said.

"Progress is still being made and Alameda and part of Santa Clara Counties are expected to be released from regulation on schedule next week," he said.

"While we are obviously disappointed to have found a fly, it was not entirely unexpected," said Ford. "We would have been extremely fortunate for 1982 to have been completely fly-free, considering the intensity of the infestation last summer."

This is the first Medfly found in San Joaquin County, Ford said. The county is just north of Stanislaus County, which USDA released from quarantine June 1. Ford said it is possible this Medfly was part of an infestation that began last fall and is now emerging.

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SUGAR IMPORT FEES REDUCED

WASHINGTON, June 25—Import fees for sugar will be reduced 0.651 cents per pound, effective July 1, Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said today. The new fees will be 3.4193 cents per pound for raw sugar and 4.4193 cents for refined sugar. At present, the fees are 4.0703 and 5.0703 cents per pound for raw and refined sugar, respectively.

Block said the fees reflect some strengthening of sugar prices in the United States following President Reagan's actions of May 5 to limit sugar imports to prevent the distruption of normal commercial markets for domestic sugar. At that time, foreign sugar, "in a situation of world surplus and intense competition, was being offered at distress prices far below the U.S. support level stipulated in the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981," Block said.

"Had that situation been permitted to continue," Block said, "foreign sugar would have displaced domestic sugar in the commercial market and domestic sugar would have been taken over by the government under the price support program.

"Such a result would be contrary to the interest of domestic producers, and would cause the needless public expenditures of several hundred million dollars."

Block said although the quota system reduces the volume of imports from foreign countries, the exporting countries now are realizing higher revenues from their sales of sugar into the higher-priced U.S. sugar market.

Under the purchase agreement program mandated by sugar price support legislation, USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation must, as of Nov. 1, purchase all eligble domestic sugar offered to it at 16.75 cents per pound, raw value.

At present, domestic processors have options to turn over about 1 million tons of sugar to CCC if they cannot get a better price on the commercial market. The purpose of import fees and quotas is to maintain domestic sugar prices at levels which will permit domestic processors to market their sugar commercially rather than having to turn it over to CCC under the support program.

Earlier this month, Block announced the import quota for the July-September quarter would be 420,000 short tons, raw value. An

indicative quota amount for the year beginning Oct. 1 of 3.3 million tons also was announced.

The import fees announced today will again be adjusted as of Oct. 1, unless market price fluctuations require an earlier adjustment.

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FOOD STAMPS SEIZED AT 2 CLEVELAND GROCERY STORES

CLEVELAND, Ohio, June 25—Federal agents executing search warrants yesterday seized about $10,000 worth of food stamps and recovered $15,000 in cash at two area food stores. According to affidavits given earlier this week in U. S. District Court, the food stamps had been illegally purchased from undercover agents of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The stores involved are Delta Superette, 8806 Superior Ave., and the E. 105th Sav-mor, of 1205 E. 105th St.

The Cleveland task force, directed by J. William Petro, U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, has been investigating allegations of fraud in the food stamp program since early this year. Special agents of the USDA, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Secret Service and the Postal Service make up the task force.

USDA Inspector General John V. Graziano and attorneys for the U.S. Justice Department last fall identified Cleveland as one of 12 major cities to be targeted for fraud task force operations. Each month about 70,000 participating families in the Cleveland metropolitan area are issued food stamps valued at over $8 million. USDA officials estimated that up to 10 percent of program dollars are subject to fraud, waste and error.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Ann Rowland is supervising the task force.

#

SCIENTISTS PROBE WHY COWS GIVE MORE MILK FOLLOWING HORMONE INJECTIONS

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa., June 28—Cows in plexiglass isolation chambers are helping unravel the mystery of why cows produce more milk after receiving injections of a growth hormone.

A U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist reported at the American Dairy Science Association meeting here today that hormone-injected cows increased milk production 26 percent, even though they ate slightly less feed in experiments inside the chambers.

Injections of the bovine growth hormone, which is traced back to research done in the 1930's, caused the cows' bodily processes or metabolism to shift to producing milk at the expense of body tissue such as fat, said USDA's Henry F. Tyrrell of the new chamber studies.

Tyrrell, an animal nutrition researcher, and colleagues in USDA's Agricultural Research Service are joining Cornell University scientists in studies of cows' reactions to the hormone.

Tyrrell said the body tissue gained or lost as fat and protein in injected cows now can be measured precisely while the animals are in the special plexiglass chambers. Cows are milked in the chambers to check milk production against fat and protein measurements.

New data about the amount of feed, water and oxygen that hormone-treated cows consume are being recorded in experiments using the chambers at the USDA's Beltsville, Md., Agricultural Research Center. How much the animals excrete as urine, feces, methane and carbon dioxide also is being measured.

Altogether, Tyrrell said, the information emerging from the studies will have "important consequences for future use of the growth hormone."

Dale E. Bauman, a nutritional biochemist at Cornell University, said that because of the scarcity and high cost of naturally occurring growth hormone, the treatments to date have lasted only a few weeks. For this reason, the long term effects on cows and on milk production are not yet known.

The growth hormone used in these experiments was extracted from cow pituitary glands obtained from meat-packing houses. Such a hormone is rare and expensive. However, a more economical growth

hormone produced by bacteria through genetic engineering may soon be available, Bauman said.

Use of growth hormone on the average dairy farm is not anticipated anytime in the near future, Tyrrell said. A number of improvements in administering the hormone, understanding how it acts in cows, and demonstrating its safety will be required before practical application would be possible.

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USDA AMENDS RULES ON MECHANICALLY SEPARATED MEAT

WASHINGTON, June 28—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will modify the composition and labeling requirements for mechanically separated meat, effective June 29.

"This action will facilitate the use of mechanically separated meat, while continuing to assure consumers they have wholesome, unadulterated meat products that are properly labeled," said Donald L. Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Mechanically separated meat is a high-protein, relatively low-cost product that is made by placing carcasses or carcass parts, which usually have been hand-trimmed but still have some remaining meat, into specialized processing equipment, Houston said. Generally, the parts are broken up and pushed under pressure against minute openings in the equipment. These openings allow the meat, along with a very small amount of finely powdered bone and other tissue, to pass through.

"The revised regulations could result in an annual net economic gain to consumers and producers of $495 million, which would enable manufacturers of these products to pass their savings along to their customers," Houston said. "In addition," he said, "as many as 640 jobs would be created."

The ingredient has been approved for use since 1978. Some of the products in which it may be used include beef patties, various types of cooked sausages, such as frankfurters and bologna, and luncheon meats.

Under the revised regulations, products containing the ingredient must show the product is mechanically separated in the ingredient statement—for example "Mechanically Separated Pork"—and also in certain cases the per serving calcium content, Houston said.

"Mechanically separated meat—often referred to by industry as mechanically deboned meat—is a significant potential source of wholesome food made possible by new processing technology," Houston said.

However, this food source has been largely ignored because of regulatory requirements that are more restrictive than necessary to protect consumers, he said. With the revised regulations, we should see greater marketing of foods containing mechanically separated (species)—beef, pork or lamb, he said.

Provisions of the regulations are:

— The name will be "mechanically separated (species)," rather than "mechanically processed (species) product."

— The labels must list the presence of the product in the ingredients statement. Previously, its presence also had to appear in a qualifying phrase next to the name of the finished product.

— The labels of certain processed items containing mechanically separated product must list the amount of calcium in one serving of the finished item. Previously, the labels had to include the statement "Contains Up To % Powdered Bone."

— There will be two categories of the product: One will contain no more than 30 percent fat and no less than 14 percent protein. The second is not subject to fat or protein content requirements, but it can be used only in food in which total fat content is limited by other regulation—such as franks, bologna and Italian sausage.

The revised regulations do not change the present 20 percent restriction on the amount of ingredient permitted in the livestock and poultry product portion of a finished product. In addition, the present USDA restrictions on the bone particle size and bone solids content of the ingredient are retained. At least 98 percent of the bone particles can be no larger than 0.5 millimeter, no single particle can be larger than 0.85 millimeter and, as a measure of bone content, the product may contain no more than 0.75 percent calcium.

The ingredient cannot be used in baby, junior or toddler foods, Houston said, because it would add extremely small amounts of fluoride to infant diets. It may not be used when it would alter the basic characteristics expected of meat food products such as ground beef, fabricated steaks, barbecued meats and corned beef cuts.

"These restrictions, as well as other requirements, ensure that foods containing this product are safe, wholesome and properly labeled," Houston added.

A 1977 report by a panel of government scientists who evaluated the health and safety questions associated with mechanically separated product concluded that it could be safely used if properly regulated, Houston said.

In 1979, and again in 1981, members of the red meat industry petitioned USDA to change its 1978 regulations on the ingredient.

In July 1981 USDA proposed modifications in the 1978 regulations. USDA received over 1,600 comments. These comments expressed a wide diversity of views on mechanically separated product, Houston said. A majority of the comments favored at least some modification of the 1978 regulations.

Notice of the action is scheduled to be published in the June 29 Federal Register, available in most public libraries.

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USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR MAY

WASHINGTON, June 29—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today released its monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for May.

USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans—thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost and liberal.

Esther Winterfeldt, administrator of the Human Nutrition Information Service, said the plans consist of foods that provide well-balanced meals and snacks for a week.

USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and prepared at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods and other nonfood items bought at the store.

"USDA costs are only guides to spending," Winterfeldt said. "Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes and how much food is prepared at home.

"Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable," she said. "The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon allotment in the food stamp program, is for families with less money for food. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan."

Details of the four food plans are described in Home and Garden Bulletin No. 94, "Family Food Budgeting. . .for Good Meals and Good Nutrition," which may be purchased for $2.50 each from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK IN MAY 1982

	Plans			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate-cost	Liberal
Families:				
Family of 2 (20-54 years)	$34.10	$44.10	$55.30	$66.20
Family of 2 (55 years and over)	30.80	39.50	48.90	58.30
Family of 4 with preschool children	48.40	61.90	77.30	92.40
Family of 4 with elementary school children	58.30	74.90	93.80	112.30
Individuals in four-person families:				
Children:				
1-2 years	7.90	9.90	12.30	14.60
3-5 years	9.50	11.90	14.70	17.60
6-8 years	12.10	15.50	19.30	23.10
9-11 years	15.20	19.30	24.20	29.00

COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK IN MAY 1982—Continued

	Plans			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate-cost	Liberal
Females:				
12-19 years	14.40	18.30	22.70	27.00
20-54 years	13.90	17.90	22.30	26.60
55 and over	12.70	16.30	20.10	23.80
Males:				
12-14 years	16.20	20.50	25.60	30.60
15-19 years	17.80	22.60	28.30	34.00
20-54 years	17.10	22.20	28.00	33.60
55 and over	15.30	19.60	24.40	29.20

To estimate your family food costs

— For members eating all meals at home—or carried from home—use the amounts shown.

— For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from the amount shown for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out five days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one-fourth the cost shown.

— For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart are for individuals in four-person families. If your family has more or less than four, total the "individual" figures and make these adjustments, because larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones:

— For a one-person family, add 20 percent.
— For a two-person family, add 10 percent.
— For a three-person family, add 5 percent.
— For a three-person family, add 5 percent.
— For a family of five or six persons, subtract 5 percent.
— For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

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APPRAISAL OF FAIR MARKET GRAZING RENTAL VALUE TO BEGIN SOON

WASHINGTON, June 29—A joint appraisal of the fair market value of rental fees charged for livestock grazing on public lands in 16 western states will begin next month.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management will do the appraisal.

Forest Service Chief R. Max Peterson said the appraisal is part of a review and evaluation of the present federal grazing fee formula and other fee options required by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978.

Data from the review and evaluation will be used to recommend a new fee schedule to Congress for 1986 and subsequent grazing years.

The 16 states to be included in the appraisal are Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Peterson said the appraisal will begin in July and be completed by November 1983. Field appraisers from the two agencies will locate and obtain details of private grazing leases. Private appraisers will review the joint appraisal in March, 1984.

The total review and evaluation effort involves four tasks, Peterson said. The first is to evaluate the current fee formula; the second is to see how close the formula is to fair market value; the third is to evaluate other grazing fee options; the fourth is to recommend a new fee schedule if the analysis indicates one is needed.

In addition to the appraisal, efforts that are part of the review and evaluation include:

— USDA's Statistical Reporting Service has surveyed 12,000 ranching operations in portions of five northern Great Plains states to check the validity of the forage value index used in the current grazing fee formula.

— Colorado State University has been contracted to identify and describe grazing fee systems and user charges for state, local government and other federal grazing lands.

— USDA's Economic Research Service is studying the actual costs of livestock production for data that can be used to evaluate the effects of other grazing fee systems on ranchers' income and western rural communities.

Concerns of the livestock industry, public interest groups and other parties affected by or interested in this effort will be identified throughout the grazing fee review and evaluation. On-going participation through informal discussions and briefings will inform the public about the status of the review and provide alternative fee options, and be used in developing final recommendations.

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USDA REVIEWING FOOD STAMP USE BY MEXICAN NATIONALS IN TEXAS

WASHINGTON, June 29—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is reviewing food stamp participation by Mexican nationals in four border counties of Texas, according to USDA Inspector General John V. Graziano.

This action resulted from alleged abuses of the food stamp program by Mexican nationals in Hidalgo, Cameron, El Paso and Webb Counties, reported recently by Station KRGV-TV, Welasco, Texas.

The review is being made by USDA's Office of the Inspector General, the Food and Nutrition Service, which administers the food stamp program, and the Texas Department of Human Resources.

Graziano said the review will evaluate the adequacy of procedures used by the counties to verify eligibility of households participating in the food stamp program and check the effectiveness of these procedures in limiting food stamp participation to eligible people in the project area.

The review will include a statistically valid random sample drawn from all participating households in the counties. Reviewers will interview sample households to determine eligibility.

The field work will be completed by the end of July, Graziano said.

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USDA MOVES TO RECRUIT ENGINEERS IN SENIOR YEAR OF COLLEGE

MADISON, Wisc., June 30—Research engineers in agriculture are in short supply, but the U.S. Department of Agriculture is taking steps to recruit and develop engineers while in their senior year of college.

Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said the new program to attract four engineers a year to USDA's Agricultural Research Service will be started in the fall. He made the announcement at the American Society of Agricultural Engineers meeting here today.

"USDA is committed to encouraging young engineering talent," Block said. "Such talent will be needed as research works to increase the productivity of animal and crop production systems while at the same time wisely using the natural resources needed for sustained agricultural production."

Terry B. Kinney, Jr., administrator of USDA's Agricultural Research Service, said these new engineers will be assigned to a limited number of research engineering positions expected to become vacant in the agency in the next three to four years.

Kinney said that within the agency, the largest agricultural research organization in the world, the number of research engineers in April 1982 totaled 316 compared to 338 in 1980.

"These figures dramatically emphasize the steadily worsening shortage of research engineers faced by the agency," the administrator said.

Engineers, who account for about 9.5 percent of the agency's total research staff, always have been "an important part of the whole structure that comprises agricultural research," Kinney said. "Over the years, they have made vital contributions to the work of the research agency."

Agricultural research relies on engineers to develop instrumentation, controls and special equipment needed to prevent or overcome problems in crop and animal production, processing and use of natural resources. Some of the major needs for engineering research today are in soil erosion control, irrigation and water conservation, and food safety and quality controls.

According to Kinney, the new program will recruit engineers in two stages, leading to a federal career.

New engineers will be recruited into the program in their senior year of undergraduate school at the GS-5 or GS-7 level. After the engineers are selected, they will be assigned to an Agricultural Research Service location near a graduate school at a cooperating university where a USDA engineer can serve as their mentor.

Kinney said each recruit will be given the education and experience to prepare them to conduct independent research on a specific agricultural problem.

Then, after approximately two to three years, the new engineers will be assigned to work at a research location designated at the beginning of the recruitment.

Kinney said the USDA agency will continue to utilize the normal federal recruitment and hiring processes to fill most of the agency's engineering vacancies.

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USDA REVISES MEAT ALTERNATE REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL LUNCHES

WASHINGTON, June 30—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today proposed to maintain the meat alternate quantity requirements schools have been using for the past several years. This proposal would revise a rarely implemented rule that raised the quantity requirements for cooked dry beans, peas or eggs for the coming school year.

The proposal would allow schools to serve one-half cup of cooked dry beans or peas or one large egg to fulfill the two-ounce meat/meat alternate provision of the national school lunch meal pattern. This had been the requirement prior to May 1980, when the portion sizes were doubled. However, due to problems encountered by schools and industry in meeting the larger portion sizes, USDA allowed exceptions to the May 1980 rule until July 1982.

"Exceptions to the rule were required in so many cases that the proposal won't significantly change what is now being served in the national school lunch program meals," USDA's Food and Nutrition

Service Administrator Samuel J. Cornelius said. "This proposal should help avoid wasting food.

"The proposed portion sizes would assure a lunch that provides protein far exceeding one-third of the recommended dietary allowances, which is the goal of the lunch program," Cornelius said.

To provide for an adequate comment period on the proposal, USDA will publish a notice to delay the July 1, implementation date when all schools are required to change the portion sizes.

The proposal is scheduled to appear in the June 29 Federal Register. Comments should be sent by August 30 to Cynthia H. Ford, nutrition and technical services division, Food and Nutrition Service, Alexandria, Va. 22302.

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USDA PROPOSES STIFFER PENALTIES FOR FOOD STAMP ABUSES

WASHINGTON, June 30—Food stamp abusers will get stiffer disqualification penalties under a proposal announced today by Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Mary C. Jarratt.

Under the proposal, people found guilty of intentional misrepresentation or fraud will be disqualified from the food stamp program for six months for the first offense, 12 months for the second and permanently if found guilty of a third offense. These penalties would apply to all individuals regardless of whether they are determined guilty at state or local administrative disqualification hearings or in courts of law.

Currently, persons found guilty of fraud at administrative hearings are disqualified for three months, while those found guilty by courts are disqualified for six to 24 months for food stamp abuses.

In the past, states have been reluctant to conduct administrative fraud hearings because they viewed findings of fraud to be under the jurisdiction of the legal system.

The proposal would add the intentional making of false or misleading statements to the offenses for which a person can be disqualified from the food stamp program. Then, states will not have to

prove fraud per se, but only intentional misrepresentation by the household. Persons would be disqualified or violations of any state food stamp statute under the proposal announced today.

"This is one of the many measures we're taking to improve the integrity of the food stamp program and eliminate fraud, waste and abuse," said Jarratt. "These rules should encourage states to actively pursue persons abusing the program by handling more cases of suspected fraud administratively."

The proposal would also change the way states recover overpayments. If a household receives more benefits than it is entitled to as a result of intentional misrepresentation, recovery would be the same as for a fraudulent overissuance.

Under current procedures, only the disqualified individual is responsible for repaying fraudulent overissuances. With the proposal, the househould would be responsible for repaying the overissuance by agreeing to a reduction in its allotment or making the repayment in cash.

The state agency would also reduce a household's future allotments to collect overpayments due to inadvertent errors by the recipient. These reductions would be limited to 10 percent of the household's allotment or $10 a month, whichever results in faster collection.

In addition, state agencies would be able to turn any claim over to a professional collection agency or take the household to court if it fails to respond to the agency's letter demanding repayment.

Comments on this proposed rule will be accepted until Aug. 20 and will be considered in developing final rules. Send comments to: Thomas O'Connor, family nutrition programs, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, Alexandria, Va. 22302.

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SWIFT INDEPENDENT PACKING CO. AGREES TO PAY $10,000 PENALTY

WASHINGTON, June 30—Swift Independent Packing Co., a national meat packer with main offices in Chicago, Ill., has agreed to pay a $10,000 civil penalty and to accept a cease and desist order to

settle charges that a Baton Rouge, La., employee sold meat at false weights from July 1979 to January 1982, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

B.H. Jones, head of USDA's Packers and Stockyards Administration, said Swift, successor to the fresh meats division of Swift & Co., consented to the order without admitting or denying the administrative charges filed by USDA earlier this month.

Jones said the charges involved a Swift employee who allegedly sold wholesale meat at padded weights at the firm's sales unit in Baton Rouge, La. The employee allegedly altered weights already printed on meat containers, resulting in sales invoices showing false weights. He also billed and collected from customers on the basis of the false weights.

USDA Administrative Law Judge John A. Campbell ordered Swift Independent Packing Co. to cease and desist from the practices. The cease and desist order, similar to a permanent injunction, was issued to insure future compliance with the Packers and Stockyards Act, which is a fair trade practices law designed to maintain fair and open competition in the marketing of livestock, poultry and meat.

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USDA ADJUSTS INCOME GUIDELINES FOR FOOD STAMP PARTICIPATION

WASHINGTON, June 30—The U. S. Department of Agriculture will increase its income eligibility guidelines for the food stamp program 10 percent on July 1, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Mary C. Jarratt announced today.

"The department adjusts the income guidelines each year to reflect increases in the cost of living, "said Jarratt. "We do not expect a significant number of additional people to join the program as a result of this adjustment."

Currently, 22.7 million people receive food stamp benefits.

Income limits of the food stamp program are 30 percent above the Office of Management and Budget's poverty line and vary by household

size. This increase will mean the monthly gross income limit for a family of four will increase from $916 to $1,008.

Prior to last October, eligibility for the food stamp program was based on an applicant's net income after certain deductions and income disregards. However, the 1981 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act changed the law to require that eligibility for all applicants except the elderly and disabled be based on gross income rather than net income.

USDA is required by law to update the income limits each July 1. Guidelines for Alaska and Hawaii are slightly higher than those in the continental U.S. and the territories. Following are the old and new annual income limits which take effect for families of various sizes in the continental U.S. and the territories.

1	$467	$507
2	617	674
3	766	841
4	916	1,008
5	1,065	1,175
6	1,215	1,342
7	1,364	1,508
8	1,514	1,675
For each additional person, add	+150	+167

The announcement also includes adjusted guidelines for Alaska and Hawaii.

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USDA REDUCES CALIFORNIA MEDFLY QUARANTINE ZONE

WASHINGTON, July 1—Quarantine zone boundaries in California for Mediterranean fruit flies will be reduced on July 2, U.S. Department of Agriculture officials said today.

The newly released areas include all of Alameda County and about a third of the still-regulated part of Santa Clara County—all except the extreme northwest portion of the county.

"We are continuing to make progress," said Harvey L. Ford, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "Even including part of San Joaquin County which was placed under quarantine following last week's fly find, the regulated area is still far smaller than at the height of the infestation."

USDA released about 90 percent of Santa Clara County—site of the original Medfly finds in the Bay area—from regulation in June, along with about a third of Santa Cruz County.

In addition to the part of Santa Clara County still under regulation, all of San Mateo County, about two-thirds of Santa Cruz County, and about 81 square miles around Stockton in San Joaquin County are still regulated.

"At the height of the infestation in 1981, we had all or part of seven California counties under quarantine," said Ford.

"The further reduction—and the relatively small area still regulated—are signs of the progress that has been made toward eradication," he said.

Ford said fruits and vegetables may now move out of the released areas without restriction. In the still-regulated areas, Medfly host produce must be treated by approved methods before leaving.

Notice of the new quarantine boundaries will be published in the July 2 Federal Register.

#

UNITED AND EASTERN AIR LINES CHARGED WITH VIOLATING ANIMAL TRANSPORTATION STANDARDS"

WASHINGTON, June 30—United Air Lines, Inc., of Chicago, Ill., and Eastern Air Lines, Inc., of Miami, Fla., have been charged by the U.S. Department of Agriculture with seven counts each of violating transportation standards of the Animal Welfare Act.

According to E.C. Sharman, veterinarian in charge of field operations for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, both airlines have 20 days to respond to the charges and can request a hearing before an administrative law judge. Failure to respond consitututes admission of the charge.

Sharman said all seven counts against United Air Lines were related to four shipments of live animals under substandard conditions.

The first charge against United involves a polar bear shipped in an inadequately ventilated crate from Omaha, Neb., to Philadelphia, Pa., Oct. Oct. 1, 1981. The bear was dead on arrival, with heat prostration the apparent cause, Sharman said.

The other three counts involve dogs. On Sept. 12, 1979, two dogs shipped by United from San Francisco International Airport in California to Dulles International Airport, Washington, D.C., died enroute from heat prostration. Other deficiencies occurred with dogs shipped Nov. 5, 1981, from Norfolk, Va., to Imperial Beach, Calif., and Dec. 21, 1981, from New Castle, Ala., to Colorado Springs, Colo. The crates were not structurally sound and did not have adequate ventilation. Also, Sharman said, there was no labeling to indicate "live animals" or "this side up," and no feeding or watering instruction on the outside of the crates.

All seven counts against Eastern Air Lines involve one dog. Sharman said Eastern Air Lines is charged with accepting a dog being shipped from Atlanta, Ga., to San Francisco, Calif., July 14, 1981, in a shipping crate that was too small for the dog to move about normally. Also, Sharman said, there were no rims on the crate's exterior to keep other crates from blocking the dog's air supply and there was no suitable litter. There was no labeling to indicate "live animals" or the crate's correct upright position. In addition, there were no feeding or watering instructions fastened to the outside of the crate.

The dog died in transit, with heat prostration the probable cause, Sharman said.

If an administrative law judge finds either United or Eastern in violation, USDA is asking that the airline be fined and a cease-and-desist order be issued against future violations. This order is a type of permanent injunction. Failure to obey it can result in fines for each time a violation occurs.

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CCC LOAN INTEREST RATE DECREASED TO 13.5 PERCENT

WASHINGTON, July 1—Commodity and farm storage loans disbursed in July by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 13.5 percent interest rate, according to CCC Executive Vice President Everett Rank.

The new rate, down from 13.625 percent, reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury in July, Rank said.

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ADDITIONAL ADJUSTERS SENT TO STORM AREAS

WASHINGTON, July 1—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block today said he is sending up to 20 additional Federal Crop Insurance Corporation crop loss adjusters into storm-damaged areas of Northwest Texas and adjacent counties in New Mexico and Oklahoma.

FCIC already has 47 adjusters working in those areas where recent storms caused extensive crop damage, with cotton being hardest hit.

"We want to expedite the adjustment of claims as quickly as possible so farmers, where able, can explore alternative choices such as replanting to other crops," Block said. "We don't want the government to cause any unnecessary delays."

Earlier in the week Block sent a five-man USDA fact-finding team headed by Deputy Assistant Secretary John Ford to assess the storm damage. As of this morning, damage to about 155,000 acres has been reported to FCIC.

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